PROSPECT RESEARCH
FOR THE NON
RESEARCHER

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What does the professional research have that you don’t have?

- Time
- Resources
- Training
- Experience
What do you have?

- A need to know specific information about a prospect’s capacity
- Access to public information
- Personal knowledge of the prospect
What do you need to know?

- Where does your prospect live?
- Does she/he own property?
- Where does your prospect work?
- Does that employment contribute to gift capacity?
- Does the prospect give elsewhere? How much?
- Where is your prospect connected in the community?
Things you will never be able to find

- Your prospect’s net worth
- The size of his/her bank account
- Most investments
A tale of two prospects

- $2,000 unsolicited gift
- Home value = $800,000
- Political giving last year = $5,000

- $2,000 unsolicited gift
- Home value = $250,000
- Outside giving is unknown
Count the cost before you begin

- Nothing worthwhile is free – even if you don’t pay money
- Sometimes it’s worth it to pay a little money if you can
  - Trade cash for convenience
  - Vendors improve search-ability of public data
- Don’t get trapped in analysis paralysis
- Know that misinformation is mixed in with the information on many sources
- Give yourself a time limit
  - As you’re learning to use these resources, you might need more time
  - As you gain proficiency, you should shoot for about 1 hour per prospect
Real estate

- Assessment data is available on all US properties
- The kind of home a family owns usually reflects its economic status
- Primary source is the assessor for the county or township where the property is located
- Two values to look for
  - Assessed value
  - Market value
- Links to assessor’s websites:
  - www.pulawski.net
  - publicrecords.netronline.com
Real estate

- If you don’t know the county for the property, look it up here: [zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp](http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp)
  - Search for the address
  - USPS server returns the standard format and a link to “mailing industry information” for that property
  - Click on that link to get the county
- Get a rough idea of the market value at [www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com).
- **Willing to spend a little money?**
  - [www.KnowX.com](http://www.KnowX.com) has indexed real estate information from most counties across the country
  - Search many counties simultaneously
  - Retrieving a single real estate record costs about $7.
Donations

- Political donations benefiting federal candidates are reported by the Federal Election Commission.
- Gift sizes are limited, but can total $115,500 in a two year election cycle.
- Not a charitable gift, but...
- Strong correlation between political giving and charitable giving.
- FEC report may also show home address, employer and business title.
- You’ll learn which way they lean politically.
Donations

- Go to [herndon1.sdrdc.com/fecimg/norindsea.html](herndon1.sdrdc.com/fecimg/norindsea.html)
  - Enter the prospect’s name
  - You may need to try nicknames to get more complete results (John Smith and Jack Smith)
  - Results screen shows all political donors by that name
  - Narrow down the results by noting the donor’s city and state
- **Willing to spend a little money?**
  - No legal requirement for charitable donations to be reported
  - [www.nozasearch.com](www.nozasearch.com) has collected over 41 million donation records from annual reports
  - Can search by many different parameters including name and zip
  - Annual subscription costs $800
Public company insiders

- Insiders must disclose stock holdings in companies with which they have one of these relationships
  - Director
  - Top officer
  - 10% shareholder
- Most people who own stock are *not* insiders
- Insiders typically are 1% or less of a nonprofit constituency
- Go to [www.j3sg.com](http://www.j3sg.com)
  - Quick Search
  - Insider Reports
  - Enter your prospect’s name and click Go
Other professionals

- Lawyers: Martindale-Hubbell (www.martindale.com)
- ZoomInfo: General profiles on professionals automatically compiled from Internet sources (www.zoominfo.com)
- LinkedIn: A social networking site for professionals (www.linkedin.com)
- Hoovers: A business directory searchable by executive name (www.hoovers.com/free)
Income

- If your prospect is an insider, you’re in luck. Find insider top officer salaries here:
  - swz.salary.com/execcomp/layoutscripts/excl_companysearch.asp

- For most prospects, you’ll need to depend on salary surveys to get a ballpark estimation
  - www.salary.com
  - www.jobs-salary.com
Why not start with Google?

- A large portion of the Internet is invisible to Google
- Google returns a lot of junk that must be filtered by hand
- Targeted research yields targeted results
- Use key words learned early in your research to improve your Google search as the final step
There is no magic formula that translates research data into the perfect ask amount.
Research is no substitute for good relationship building.

Goals your research:
- Find evidence of philanthropy
- Suggest a gift vehicle
- Rank prospects based on evidence of capacity
- Estimate gift capacity

Some estimation methods:
- A prospect may give 5-10% of annual income
- Total real estate $x 4 x 5% (only when real estate value $500K)
- Total stock holdings $x 4 x 5% (only when stock value $100K)
- 5% of all known assets (only when assets $1 million)
Can’t get enough?

- www.lambresearch.com has an annotated list of links useful for doing additional prospect research, including alternatives to the sites shown here.
- Need to hire a freelancer? Go here for an incomplete list of reputable firms: home.comcast.net/~lambresearch/OtherPages.htm#ResearchFirms